



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, November 2, 2017  
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park  
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Bob Frost, Vice-Chair Mike Milillo, Commissioners Bobby Alpert, Steve Dodd, Con Englehorn, and Jace McKeighan

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Cynthia Wenstrom

**STAFF:** Bill Murphy, Director of Community Services; Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Senior Trails Planner; Natural Resources Coordinators Yvonne Massman, Robert Graves, and John Loleit

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Frost called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members present as noted above.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONER ALPERT MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 5, 2017 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER ENGLEHORN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0).**

## **5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE**

Paul Staker mentioned that the Junior Citizens Science Festival scheduled for November 3rd and 4th is sold out. They are expecting approximately 800 visitors over two days. Friday will be primarily school groups and Saturday will be primarily families.

The 25th Anniversary exhibit that has been at Brown's Ranch has moved to the Arizona Heritage Center. In exchange, one of the Historical Society's exhibits will be displayed at Brown's Ranch until May, beginning with a grand opening at 9:00 a.m. on November 18th.

Mr. Staker noted that the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy has done some restructuring to reflect their current priorities.

The Steward Education Program is now the Education Program, which reflects the emphasis on public education through public programs at locations such as the library and Scottsdale Community College. New Steward Orientation is now Steward Development and will include orientation, mentoring, continued growth, recruitment, and retention.

Commissioner Alpert commended Yvonne Massman for the outstanding job she did teaching the first aid class he attended.

## **6. TPK ENDURANCE EVENT REQUEST**

Scott Hamilton said that the First Annual TPK Expedition One Endurance Race requested a special use permit, which will grant them access from Windmill Trail to Bell Pass, Prospector, Thompson Peak, and from Windmill to Tom's Thumb Trail junction. The event is similar in nature to the Frenzy and will be staged in the county park.

Howard Myers spoke in opposition to competitive events being allowed in the Preserve.

Event Organizer Brandon Welling explained that there are approximately 50 participants and they will be providing maps to follow while in the Preserve. Activities within the Preserve boundaries are limited to hiking and running and participants will be out of the Preserve no later than 5:00 p.m. All challenges will be held in the regional park.

Commissioner McKeighan expressed concern about competitive events being held in the Preserve. He felt that the smaller event was acceptable, but larger events should not be permitted.

Mr. Hamilton said it can be arranged to have staff present during the event. The Conservancy Pathfinders will also be notified about the event.

**VICE-CHAIR MILILLO MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR THE 2018 TPK EXPEDITION ONE EVENT. COMMISSIONER DODD SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0).**

## **7. TRAILHEAD UPDATES**

### **Pima Dynamite**

Phil Weddle gave a presentation on the progress of the Pima Dynamite trailhead. His presentation included a site plan analysis, amenities, an explanation of how the disturbed areas will be used, drainage patterns, conceptual renderings, ingress and egress plans, and parking. The first open house will be on November 12<sup>th</sup> at Brown's Ranch, followed by a public meeting at Pima Elementary School. Construction is expected to start in fall of 2018 with an opening date in fall of 2019.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Kroy Ekblaw explained that they have worked with the Transportation Department and the police department in designing the deceleration lanes in both directions off of Dynamite. Temporary parking will be in the disturbed area adjacent to the power lines. The wash at this location is considered by the Army Corps of Engineers to be a navigable waterway.

Mr. Ekblaw said that the Master Plan will likely anticipate in excess of 300 parking spaces, but only approximately 200 will be built initially. Commissioner Englehorn commented that historically, the additional spaces are added to trailhead parking areas within the first few years of opening. Commissioners suggested moving forward with the full parking area now instead of expanding at a later date.

### **Granite and Fraesfield**

Kroy Ekblaw noted that the municipal use site plan for Granite and Fraesfield will be going to the Development Review Board on November 17<sup>th</sup> and to the Planning Commission on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Once approved by City Council, DRB will do an architectural review.

Tom's Thumb Trailhead parking expansion has been completed.

## **8. COMMERCIAL AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT GUIDELINES**

Scott Hamilton described the two sets of special use permit guidelines currently in place, "special use permit guidelines" and "guidelines for guiding permits". The overall policy guidelines will remain the same, including the types of activities permitted. The categories will be clarified, fees will be established in some cases, and the administrative process for commercial permits will be streamlined. Categories include wedding ceremonies and gatherings, life celebrations, professional family photography, production photography, community club activities, single-day commercial activities, conference field trips, bus tours, and single-day guiding services.

Yvonne Massman and Robert Graves discussed changes to guidelines for guiding permits. Currently the 23 commercial outfitters operating in the Preserve are billed quarterly at the time they submit their quarterly reports. When the ActiveNet system was put in place, their fees increased by \$60 annually because of processing fees. In an effort to streamline processing, all permits will have an August 1, 2018 start date and will renew annually. Charges for renewals and new applicants will be \$150 per year. The current rates are \$50 for renewals and \$100 for new applicants. Same day use charges will remain \$3.50 per person per day.

Howard Myers expressed concern about special uses such as weddings being allowed in the Preserve. He encouraged the City to take a critical look at the special use procedure and guidelines and to put the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission in a role of oversight and review of some of the uses.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Hamilton said that the commercial guiders were able to review the document and give input. Outfitters who only operate for a portion of the year are given a prorated rate. Ms. Massman reviewed the process of crediting outfitters for days that are not used at the end of the year. Discussion ensued regarding nature guides activities, educating groups such as hiking clubs that might not be aware of permitting requirements, and fees. Mr. Ekblaw assured the Commission that the Commission will have an opportunity to review all competitive activities before they are permitted. He reiterated that the Commission has the ability to amend policies if there ever comes a time where the number of applicants for competitive events grows.

Commissioner Alpert stated that the \$3.50 per person fee should be higher. He expressed concern about the reference to "competitive trail runs" on page 3 of 5, because a trail run is not a passive activity and competitive activities are not part of the Preserve Ordinance.

**COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE COMMERCIAL AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT GUIDELINES AS PRESENTED. VICE-CHAIR MILILLO SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ONE (1). COMMISSIONER ALPERT DISSENTED.**

## **9. PRESERVE BUDGET**

2018/2019 Fiscal Year and 10 year projections  
Future Preserve Improvement projects

Kroy Ekblaw reviewed the FY 2018/19 budget and ten-year projections that will be presented during the City Council study session on Monday, November 6th. He noted changes made by the City Treasurer since last month's meeting which included an increase of approximately \$9 million to uncommitted cash available through 2034; improvements are at \$101 million; and perpetual Preserve care funding is at approximately \$66 million. If the food sales tax is eliminated that would lower the perpetual care funds by approximately \$40 million. Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the current budget including direct costs, administrative costs, indirect costs, and trailhead addition costs. The budget documents are available for online viewing through a link on the Commission agenda.

Mr. Ekblaw discussed planned Preserve improvements, highlighting plans for Pinnacle Peak Park project, which is included as part of the FY 2018/19 budget. He noted that Pinnacle Peak Park is part of the recommended study boundary. Some Commissioners expressed concern that Pinnacle Peak Park should be removed from the recommended study boundary and Preserve funds should not be spent on improvements. Mr. Ekblaw will agendize the item for further discussion.

## **10. STAFF REPORTS**

### **Phase III Trail Plan update for 2017-2018 Season**

Mr. Hamilton said that Phase III trail planning will focus on the B, C, and D areas this season.

### **Signage Update – Dog/Heat Warning**

Mr. Hamilton presented the updated dog/heat warning sign. The new sign is 25 by 30 inches and is more graphic with writing.

### **Junior Citizens Science Festival**

Chair Frost requested that photographs of the festival be available for the next Commission meeting. Staff will provide the photographs at the next meeting.

## **11. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

There were no further Commissioner comments.

### **AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Financial report and endowment follow-up  
Review of improvement projects for future budgeting in the preserve  
Trailhead design and public meeting process  
Trailhead host concept

The next meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2018. A December or January meeting may be scheduled if needed.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

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